

Judy Waggoner
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July 18, 2024

Karen Ross
Secretary of CDFA
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Forced Resignation of Jen McGuire, CEO 18th DAA, Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fair

Dear Secretary Ross,

As you probably know or should know, Jen McGuire, CEO of the 18th DAA was forced to resign by Michael Flores and Haig Baghdassarian at our meeting on 6/24/24. What you probably don't know are the true facts that led up to her resignation.

Jen McGuire is the best CEO that the 18th DAA has ever had. In this environment where there is no State funding available for our fairgrounds, Jen's hard work and accomplishments have created a thriving operation from a fair that was almost, if not already, bankrupt. These accomplishments should not be discounted in light of the fact that the first audit in fifteen (15) years turned up many internal control and compliance issues that can be fixed, now that we are aware of the State mandated procedures.

Michael Flores knew about Jen McGuire's accomplishments with our fair and that she was well respected in the Fair Industry. That's why he approached the 18th DAA and the 31st DAA Board of Directors in May of 2023 to have Jen Co-CEO with Ventura and Bishop. He led both Boards to believe that Jen would receive the top salary step of Ventura's CEO salary and that Ventura could pay her mileage (295 miles one way). Jen never received the salary adjustment that both Boards agreed upon because Michael Flores put a hold on her salary in June 2023. The hold would be until after the audit was completed. The audit is complete, so why isn't she getting her well-deserved salary? The audit should not have anything to do with her working both fairgrounds. She's done the work and needs to be paid. I called Michael Flores on 3/20/24 when I asked him about Jen's pay. He told me that he had met with "his team" and he mentioned your name, Karen Ross, as part of the team. He said, "We were discussing different routes as to how to pay Jen." What's to discuss? Ventura was going to pay 75% and TCF was going to pay 25% and Ventura would pay her mileage. In a phone call to Haig on 2/6/24 he told me, "Of course, Jen will get her pay retroactive to June 1, 2023." Haig actually told me this in two different phone calls.

Visha Rai, CDFA Staff Management Auditor, is the person that conducted our compliance audit. We wanted this audit, as we felt it would be a learning and educational experience. Jen and the Board want to do things correctly, especially since there wasn't any training for new CEO's or Fair Board Directors.

Visha Rai was threatening, intimidating, and badgering our staff and volunteers when conducting her interviews during the audit. She was unprofessional and asked inappropriate questions. Visha asked Employee B, where do you sleep at night and her response was none of your business. This question and answer was the beginning of the clash between Visha and Employee B. That was definitely an improper question. I wonder if Visha didn't do the required training that the CDFA Online University offers: Ethics Orientation for State Officials and Maintaining a Respectful Work Environment.

On 12/8/23, Jen replied to Visha's email, (copied Ron Shackleford, Michael Flores, Haig Baghdassarian and myself) and said she didn't intentionally give her the wrong laptop and she didn't welcome harassment, bullying, stress and that Visha insinuated that Jen falsified records. No one responded to Jen's email.

I sent an email to Michael Flores on 12/14/23 asking when Jen was going to get paid her agreed upon salary adjustment between Ventura and TCF. She has been doing the job at both fairgrounds for six (6) months. He did not respond.

On 12/21/23 I sent an email to Justin Hopper of CDFA Civil Rights, and I copied Michael Flores, Haig Baghdassarian, Ron Shackleford, Mike Francesconi, Brandi Gragg, and Denise Elliott regarding how Visha Rai was conducting inappropriate interviews and about Jen McGuire not receiving her salary. I was hoping that a replacement Auditor would take over and complete the audit. That didn't happen. Justin questioned Michael Flores and Haig Baghdassarian and ever since then, Jen and the TCF Board have been deliberately targeted. CDFA supposedly has a "Zero Tolerance" policy for all discrimination, harassment and retaliation.

The audit is filled with half-truths and lies. Haig Baghdassarian appointed Peter Weber from his office to represent us and help write our answers to the audit. Peter told us not to dispute the findings, but to give one or two sentences of how we were going to correct them. This is what we did from his recommendation. We were never given the opportunity to correct the issues, in the upcoming months, as stated in our responses because Michael Flores came to our meeting on June 24, 2024, insisting that we fire Jen. Many of the violations were already corrected, and Visha knew this, but still ended up in the

Final Audit Report. We offered putting Jen on probation and that we would oversee and correct the violations, and we would request an audit in a year. He would not accept our proposal. Peter Weber was not at our meeting, and we had no legal representation.

Michael Flores sited "trust" and missing credit card receipts, as to why he wanted Jen fired. He's a fine one to talk about trust, as Jen, the TCF Board and the Ventura Board put our faith and trust in him when he told us Jen would receive her salary adjustment and her mileage would be paid. He lied to us!

CDFA employees told me that they suggested to Michael Flores not to go forward with Jen's firing, but he ignored them.

Jen has support from our community members, businesses, City of Bishop, Bishop City Counsel, Inyo County Supervisors, Friends of the Fair and various organizations. They feel, after reading the audit that it is one-sided, that some sections appear to be a personal vendetta, and that some of the allegations should not be in a compliance audit. Our Fair Family is devastated along with our communities that have enjoyed the many events Jen has brought to TCF and the extra dollars spent in our communities.

CDFA personnel have committed Bagley-Keene violations and because of that, any action taken at our meeting on June 24, 2024, should be null and void. I am requesting that Jen's forced resignation be repealed and that she be immediately reinstated as CEO of the 18th DAA, Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fair and that the 18th DAA Board of Directors be reinstated with their full duties and responsibilities.

Please look into this injustice of Jen McGuire's forced resignation. The courtesy of a reply is appreciated. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Judy Waggoner, President
18th DAA, Eastern Sierra Tri-County Fair

Attachment: Jen McGuire's Accomplishments

Cc: Senator Alvarado-Gil
31st DAA, Ventura County Board of Directors

Heidi Ortiz

From: danny hernandez <dannyhernandez93060@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 8:13 AM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] jen mcguire

Heidi -

I was directed to send this to you. Can this be read at the board meeting? I can't be there in person. This is very important. Thank you.

Dear Directors -

I am writing in regards to Jen McGuire. I am a Santa Paula resident, FFA alumni and have a long history of being involved in the fair. I've seen a lot of people come and go. This community was overjoyed when Jen was hired and named CEO. It was the best decision you ever made. One of our own was in the driver's seat.

I am going to get right to the point. WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU? I hope you're doing everything in your power to get her back. She is a superstar and the best thing that has ever happened to the fairgrounds. So many of our kids look up to her. She is a role model for our daughters. Again, WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU? I read the audit and can smell BS a mile away. I'm a blue collar, middle income Hispanic working man. I have a high school education. Most of you are probably college graduates with degrees. I know our very own mayor is on the board. If I can see right through it, then you should be able to do the same.

She loves the place. Have you walked the grounds and seen what she has done in a short period of time? That is someone with passion and vision. She's not there for personal gain or to grab a few years of employment before retirement.

Fight for your employee. Fight for what is right. Don't fall for the political BS. Our world is already full of it. Do what's right for the fairgrounds and bring her back!!

Thank you.

Danny Hernandez
Santa Paula, CA

Denise Berrington
453 Mockingbird Lane
Fillmore CA 93015
mdberrington@gmail.com
July 18, 2024

Ventura County Fair Board of Directors
10 W. Harbor Blvd.
Ventura, CA 93001

Dear Ventura County Fair Board of Directors,

I am writing to passionately advocate for Jennifer McGuire to be reinstated as CEO of the Ventura County Fairgrounds. Jennifer's dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to the fairgrounds and our community are truly commendable.

Jennifer's heart and soul are deeply invested in the world of fairs. For her, this is not merely a job but a lifelong passion. She understands the profound impact that fairs have on every individual who attends—from those enjoying concerts and food to participants showcasing their animals. Jennifer's vision extends beyond the day-to-day operations; she sees the fairgrounds as a vital community hub that enriches lives and brings people together.

Throughout her tenure, Jennifer has consistently gone above and beyond for everyone involved, including her staff. She ensures that her team has the tools and support needed to succeed, fostering a collaborative and empowering work environment. Her leadership style is characterized by integrity, empathy, and a relentless drive to achieve excellence. Her leadership has transformed the Ventura County Fairgrounds, making significant strides in a remarkably short time. Under her guidance, the fairgrounds have thrived and grown, becoming a competitive force among neighboring fairs.

It is crucial to recognize that Jennifer McGuire's passion for fairs is unparalleled. Her dedication and love for what she does are evident in every decision she makes and every initiative she undertakes. She would never jeopardize her passion or the integrity of the fairgrounds.

I strongly urge you to retain Jennifer McGuire as CEO of the Ventura County Fairgrounds. Her unique combination of leadership, drive, and unwavering passion sets her apart as an exceptional leader who is deeply invested in the success and future of our fairgrounds and surrounding communities. Please carefully consider Jennifer's proven track record, her outstanding reputation within our county and communities, and the strong endorsement she has received from her peers.

Thank you for considering my viewpoint. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need further information.

Sincerely,



Denise Berrington

Heidi Ortiz

From: Kathie Moore <katbeebaa@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 1:18 PM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: RE:[External] Jen McGuire

Dear Heidi Ortiz,
Board of Directors, et al,

This letter comes to you as a formal request to seriously consider appointing Ms Jennifer McGuire as the Ventura County Fair CEO.

Ms McGuire is from the community and therefore has long established business relationships that is an important asset to a successfully run fair each year.

She has shown those of us that have had the opportunity to work with her at Ventura that she is not only efficient with years of experience, but has the ability to create a friendly and cohesive work atmosphere.

I, along with many others believe that Ms McGuire would be the only person that has the expertise and knowledge to bring success to our annual fair.

I also respectfully request that this letter be read into the minutes.

Sincerely
Kathie Moore

Sent from my iPhone

Heidi Ortiz

From: Sharon Ferro <zenna4@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 8:41 AM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Jen McGuire

This is an email to the board of directors to please reinstate Jen McGuire. She has done tremendous improvements to our fair, gotten large vendors and is so much part of the future of our children in 4-H, FFA, Grange and just the general public. I support her 100% to be our fairs CEO.

I would like this read at the next board meeting on July 23, 2024

Thank you
Sharon Ferro
Sent from my iPhone

Heidi Ortiz

From: Jonny Magee <jonny@rockinbequipment.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 8:51 AM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Jen McGuire board of directors support letter

Attn: board of directors,

I am writing today in support of Jen McGuire returning to the Ventura County fairgrounds. Jen has done more in the short amount of time she has been at the fairgrounds than her predecessors. Jen has helped so many families over the years and has full support from the community. The fairgrounds has never looked better and she was just getting started. I have volunteered many hours at the fairgrounds and have seen firsthand the improvements and the positive direction the fairgrounds is/was heading. It is completely unacceptable what has happened to her and in the best interests of the fairgrounds and the community, WE want her back as CEO. Heidi Please read and include this email in Tuesday's meeting packet to be published.

Kindly,

Jonny Magee

Rockin B Ranch Equipment Inc.

Cell: (805)256-8332

Jonny@rockinbranchequipment.com

Heidi Ortiz

From: AILEEN WOKAL <alizer625@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 8:29 AM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Jen McGuire

I am sending this email on behalf of Jennifer McGuire to give my support Jennifer McGuire is an asset to the Ventura county fairgrounds and has done more than anybody thats been in her position her position. Jennifer would never do what you are accusing her of. She is always there to help when needed if you look back on the years of the fair compared to what she has done now, it's phenomenal and I think this is all a mistake of what you're doing to her and most of all which are doing to the kids of Ventura County we as a community will be here to support her 100% in anyway I also would like this letter to be read at the board meeting and be kept as part of her file thank you Aileen Wokal Sespe 4-h .

Heidi Ortiz

From: AILEEN WOKAL <alizar625@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 8:47 AM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Jen McGuire

Dear Board of Directors -

We are writing in support of Jen McGuire. Please bring her back. She was the best thing that has happened to our fair. She truly cares about our kids and loves the facility. We need her. You need her.

Bring Jen McGuire back!

Please have this read at the board meeting as well.

Heidi Ortiz

From: Bailey Hill <baileyspencerhill33@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 9:39 AM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External]

Heidi,

My name is Bailey Hill and I am the head leader of Heritage 4H club. I am writing on behalf of Jennifer McGuire. While I'm not sure of the details in the situation that lead to her termination of employment, I am sure that she has personally helped our club over the last two years. With 4-H lacking proper leadership at the extension office, we needed a lot of extra assistance and Jen was always happy to help lead us through all the steps we needed to take to make it to fair. She made it her personal job to see us succeed as a new club. She also accommodated us so kindly while we were at the fair, answering and questions we may have. We sure did enjoy her leadership and have concerns with her not being there, especially this close to fair. I speak for myself and all who are in my club when I say we would be thrilled to see Jennifer reinstated in time for fair. I know that she is making an effort to come back and we pray she gets put back in her position in time to lead us through another successful year at the Ventura County Fair.

Thank you for your time, God bless you and yours 💖

Bailey Hill
Heritage 4-H Club
5412124862

Sent from my iPhone

Heidi Ortiz

From: nanaphedge@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 9:53 AM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Please read at Tuesday's meeting

Please read at Tuesday's Meeting

To the Board of Directors,

I take this time to share some insight into the integrity, kindness, and selflessness that is embodied in Jennifer Yeargan. In the hopes that you are encouraged to bring her back to Ventura fairgrounds. Jennifer has helped countless amounts of people and has changed Ventura Fair for the better, this is not hard to see. I have known Jennifer most of her life and know with full confidence that she is a perfect example of helping others and wanting nothing in return. Her reward is seeing others thrive and knowing that she was a part of that! I urge you to do what is right for the fairgrounds and that is to bring Jennifer back so she can continue to make the fairground better in the coming years.

Thank you,

Pam Hedge (KP Ranch Boer Goats)

Heidi Ortiz

From: Jamie Fontes <jamiefontes@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 10:25 AM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Jen

She is amazing. Helps every person I know. Our fair isn't possible without her. Most caring and helpful person there! We need her back!

Sent from my iPhone

Heidi Ortiz

From: Katelyn Magee <katelyn@rockinbequipment.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 1:06 PM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Jen McGuire support letter

Dear Board of Directors,

I am writing you today on behalf of Jen McGuire. I would like to tell you a little bit about the history behind Jen and the fair. She has been a supporter of our fair for as long as I can remember. She was the livestock superintendent when I was just a kid raising livestock and now my children are getting guided and supported by Jen, a whole second generation. Since Jen has become the CEO of the Ventura county fair she has done nothing but amazing things for our fair and she was just getting started. When Jen took the position our fair was literally "falling apart" and last year it was bigger and better than ever. We want her back as CEO and she has a huge community behind her to support her. We will continue to fight until justice is served!

Heidi please include this email in Tuesday board packet to be presented.

Thank you for your time,
Katelyn Magee

Sent from my iPhone

Heidi Ortiz

From: Paula Estrella <estrellap13@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 1:39 PM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Bring back Jen

Please have The Board of Directors read this.

****Dear Board of Directors,****

I am writing to express my strong support for bringing back CEO Jen McGuire to the Ventura County Fairgrounds. In her short tenure, she has already earned considerable praise for her exceptional energy and leadership.

The fair staff has repeatedly commended her, particularly for her role in the dramatic increase in ticket sales for this year's upcoming county fair. Her positive attitude and enthusiasm have infused new excitement into the fairgrounds' future.

Jen McGuire is a breath of fresh air, consistently bringing positivity to all occasions. Her leadership is invaluable, and I urge you to reinstate her as CEO.

Sincerely,
Paula Estrella
Sespe 4-H

Heidi Ortiz

From: Karen Fontes <karrenfontes@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 2:56 PM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] JEN

Board of Directors,

We need Jen BACK! Jen is a hardworking dedicated person who gets things done. She has accomplished so many important things for our Ventura Country Fair. She is visible and always ready to help. It is devastating to think of the loss that this community will endure if you don't bring her back. I have been attending the Fair for over 40 years and she has made a huge positive impact. Please bring Jen back.

Thank you,

Karen Fontes

Life-long Ventura County Resident

Sent from my iPhone

Heidi Ortiz

From: jordyn blankenship <blankenshipjordyn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 4:55 PM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Regarding Jen

PLEASE READ AT TUESDAY'S BOARD MEETING

Dear Board of Directors,

My name is Jordyn Blankenship. I am currently an employee of the Ventura County fair serving as a ring clerk for the junior livestock show and auction and I have previously been a participant of the Ventura county for 10 years raising market animals. I am writing this email to show my support for Jen Mcguirre. I have known Jen my whole life and I can confidently say I would not be the person I am today without her. She is hands down one of the most hardworking, selfless, honest, and inspiring women I have ever met. She has always gone above and beyond for others and has encouraged so many young people such as myself. Jen has always supported me in my endeavours and pushed me to pursue my goals and dreams. She has given me so many opportunities to flourish as a woman in the agriculture industry and I will forever be grateful for having such an amazing person support me. I urge you to do what is right and bring Jen back as our CEO. In my 12 years of attending and being a part of the Ventura County Fair, I can confidently say the past 2 years of Jen running the fair has been its best years yet. She has totally turned the fair around. Bringing so many new and exciting events that help the fairgrounds run at their full potential. She has also made an amazing impact on the junior livestock show and auction. She has truly made it bigger and better than ever. She cares so much about the youth and anyone you ask can see the same thing. Jen has my full support and many others behind her. I can't imagine the state of the fairgrounds once she leaves. She truly cares and is passionate about her job and that is evident to anyone. Again, I urge you as board members to do what is right and give this amazing, passionate role model the position back that she so greatly deserves.

sincerely,

Jordyn Blankenship

Heidi Ortiz

From: Chloe Richardson <chloerichardson411@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2024 4:37 PM
To: Heidi Ortiz
Subject: [External] Support for Jennifer Yeargan

Good afternoon Heidi,

I'd like this email read or a part of the board packet for Tuesday's meeting. Thank you!

Good afternoon Board of Directors,

I am reaching out in hopes you can do what's right for our beloved VC Fairgrounds. I showed animals for eight years and was a part of Junior Fair Board for 2 years. I am familiar with the fairgrounds and the efforts that Jennifer has put into seeing it succeed. Jennifer has the knowledge, strength, and perseverance to make the fairgrounds profitable and successful. Her initiative is unlike anyone I've known before. I urge you to bring her back as part of your team. Thank you and I hope you consider the success of the fairgrounds while making this decision.

Best,
Chloe Lozano